

Undergraduate students' experiences of access and success: Durban University of Technology

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What are your experiences of success at DUT?

"DUT is a cool university and it makes you know who you are because one has to make decisions"

"It's like everyday is fun... Probably nothing to do with academics but it's just a fun environment"

"I think I haven't unlocked my full potential compared to how I was performing at high school, I think I haven't really strived but this year I am really hoping that I produce good results"

Background

- ▶ DUT Strategic Plan 2015–2019
- ▶ Who are our students?
- ▶ Undergraduate students
- ▶ Pilot study

Research Methods

- ▶ Methodology: interpretive hermeneutic
- ▶ Research design: qualitative research
- ▶ Research methods: semi-structured interviews
- ▶ Sampling : non probability (purposive)
- ▶ Population size: 45

Research Questions

- ▶ What is your understanding of the following concepts?
- ▶ Student success
- ▶ Student access
- ▶ Student centredness
- ▶ What language do you prefer to be taught in?
- ▶ Are you enrolled in what you planned to study?
- ▶ What do you like about being a DUT student?
- ▶ What do you not like about being a DUT student?
- ▶ How has it been, to integrate to DUT systems?

Findings

Student Centredness

- ▶ Most of the students answered that they do not know the meaning of the phrase
- ▶ Some further said they have never heard the term used before
- ▶ "when an institution focuses on the students' needs in relation to the learning environment, paying attention to how they respond"
- ▶ "involves being included in institutional decisions"
- ▶ "university helps students with library, writing centre, counselling, clinic visits, sport facilities, computer labs- blackboard and internet"
- ▶ "When all activities of the universities are being centred on students"

Findings

Student Access

- › More than half of the participants said they did not have an understanding of the phrase
- › “avenues that are put for students to easily navigate the university system”
- › “access to all university resources by students”
- › “they should give us enough information before we can register”
- › Most students interviewed are not registered in their first choice institution and programme

Findings

Experiences of success

- › Growing as an individual
- › Getting highest grades in class
- › Passing all modules
- › Moving to the next level of qualification
- › Project/practical work
- › Chosen as a class representative
- › Elected as residence house committee
- › Setting your mind for success and achieving that
- › Largely associated with finishing a qualification

Findings

Experiences of access

- › 1 prefers to be taught in isiZulu
- › Only 3 are the first ones to come to university
- › Being able to access wifi; blackboard; library; computer labs
- › Not knowing how to use the above
- › DUT accepts students with low points
- › Lack of funding and student housing shortages

Findings

Likes about being a DUT student

Academic	Social
Access to the library	Diversity among students
Access to wifi	Flexible timetable
Access to the Writing Centre	Students are friendly to each other
Placement for in-service training	Enjoys Green Campus Initiative activities
Doing more practical work	Enjoys Qhakaza Women's org
Study time is appreciated	Freedom
Freedom of expression in lectures & attention from lecturers	There is a lot of support, DUT support students in various ways
DUT is recognised in industry	Sport facilities
DUT rewards students who do well	Bus transport to and from residence

Findings

Dislikes about being a DUT student

Academic	Social
Strikes & violent protests	Politics
Moodle is not advanced like other universities (usage)	It seems City campus is just for white people
Time table is packed, no time for group work	White people dominating one specific campus
Shortage of computer labs	People don't take DUT seriously
Need more books on hospitality for research	People don't know DUT, but UKZN
Some lecturers come late	Many different languages makes it easy to gossip
Tutorial groups are too big (HRM)	
Long assignments	
No time for anything else except books	Some students feel education should be given not taught

Thank You

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